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### **JOHN DONNE ON THE ORDER, OBEDIENCE AND PREACHING**

*SUMMARY.* The High Church, clergies and royal power in Pre-revolutionary England were concerned with free and unlimited preaching. The article is focused on the sermon preached by John Donne in 1622 which supported the Royal policy aimed to bound preaching as a tool of verbal communication with parishioners. John Donne, following King James I, encourages preachers to use the catechism consisting of 39 articles and the two Books of Homilies. Donne is standing up for the existing order and calls the subjects for obedience.

In his sermon John Donne touched upon the 20<sup>th</sup> verse of Chapter 5, the Book of Judges, which was the beginning point of his next discourse. The preacher and poet describes in details his understanding of the concept of order. He was for uniformity in the sphere of faith and worship. John Donne emphasized that the order implied the unity of the head and members, the King and subjects, the ruler and parishioners based on the obedience to decrees of power.

*KEY WORDS.* John Donne, High Church, sermon, order, obedience.

In the beginning of the 17th c. in England, with its complicated confessional situation [1; 69–76] (presence of catholic minority and protestant radicals, advocating continuation of the Reformation (presbyterians and sects of independents) in the religious discourse) political figures of speech were often used [2; 51–220]. It is well known that the king's power used Anglican Church, which it was heading, to pass its political and ideological directives on people during sermons [3; 105–130]. One of these directives was pronounced by King James I, who said that the nobles, the clergy, bishops, preachers, knights and gentlemen should behave similarly in the society, i.e. follow one route [4; 149]. The power could not be untouched by the preaching activities of religious nonconformists [5]. On the 4th of August 1622, to limit preachers' activity, James I addressed Archbishop of Canterbury George Abbot with a special epistle, containing orders, that were to be made known to all priests immediately. The king forbade that the clergy of the rank lower than a bishop, a cathedral dean or a university church dean should preach. All the rest had to stay within the Symbol of Faith, laid in 39 articles in 1562, and read the officially proven Anglican Breviary (two Books of Homilies). It was pronounced that the clergy used the official catechism and did not give inspired sermons. It was prescribed that archbishops and bishops should be more careful giving out licenses that allow to preach and also terminate all licenses, given out before. And while the Reformation was viewed as a return to the principles of early Christianity, it was pronounced that the catechetesis of faith was an instrument, used since old times [6; 516–518].

Rather often topics and content of official sermons were bound to a political reason or were directly outlined by the monarch [7; 22-23]. Political directives of the people in power were a common point of religious oratory.

The famous English poet and prelate John Donne (1572–1631) supported the advancement of the “official line” as much as he could. It is known that, being born in a catholic family, he became an Anglican, was appraised by a famous preacher and took a high position of the Dean of Saint Paul’s Cathedral [8]. Donne avoided extremes and innovations in religion and politics. He denied arminianism, when the fate of this doctrine in Synod of Dort (1618–1619) was determined, as puritans’ innovations made him anxious. Political views of Donne coincided with ideas of King James I. The poet assumed that all power comes from God and that God in his unity and in support of order is an analogy to monarchy. The monarch has all the power, which, nevertheless, should not turn into tyrannical and unlimited [9; 45–65].

On the 15th of September 1622 the Dean of Saint Paul’s Cathedral answered the monarch’s “Directions for Preachers”. The sermon, as Donne confessed, was done on the King’s wish. Judging by the dedication to the Duke of Buckingham, King James’ favorite, Donne was concerned with keeping the church united. In the basis of the church there lies love of the king and people, such a love that makes the church and the king, the church and the people “milk brothers” [10; 1–2].

As the rules of genre determined, the sermon started with an interpretation of one of Biblical verses. Donne chose verse 20, chapter 5 of the Book of Judges. In fact, this verse was a kind of a pretext to start a conversation about the unity, hierarchical order and sermon. The vast topic required that John Donne mentioned the content of the 4th and 5th chapters of the Book of Judges in full. It should be reminded here, that in these verses the people of Israel fell apart from God and started to worship other gods and for this they were made to serve to Javin, the king of Canaan. Then, the prophetess Deborah called Barak, who was to defeat the army of Canaan, led by Sisera. In the battle that followed the army of Canaan was defeated and driven away, and Sisera was killed by Yael, who sheltered him in her tent. The woman drove a tent peg through his temples, when he was asleep. After this Deborah sang a hymn in God’s glory, adoring the feats of Barak and Yael and reminding the Israelites that they should be in union with God (Judg. 4, 5). Here Donne also remembered the Song of Moses, sung after the miraculous rescue from the Egyptian captivity, and also Solomon’s Song of Songs, David’s Psalms and other passages from the Bible, to underline the idea that the people will always be punished, if they do not follow God’s commandment, God’s law and the order, established by God. If, otherwise, people are united with God, than he will always help them to defeat enemies. Moreover, people should always stand bravely and fight for God’s deeds, for, although God can fulfill any of their intentions directly, he strives to make people put more effort to it and help him [10; 2–5].

In an organized world all of its components are important. Donne considered Chapter 5 as important, probably, because different categories participating in antagonism are mentioned there. In the 15th verse of Chapter 5 of the Book of

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Judges it is said about princes, and Donne aimed to outline the position of the king in the society. The power of kings, according to Donne, comes from God, as he has passed crowns directly on them. “Yee are Gods, the Kings of the earth” (Psalms 81:6). “They goe in their assistance to the Warre; They goe in their Mediation for Peace”; the kings often fail to find gratitude, as their work is not seen, “and Christ himeself would not alwayes bee seen”, exclaims Donne. “Kings cannot alwayes goe in the sight of Men, and so they lose their thanks; but they cannot go out of the sight of God”. They never lose God’s gratitude. Moreover, God watches them silently, but rewards openly [10; 10–11].

People of high positions are also important for governing — they are mentioned in verse 9 of the same chapter. People in service also help God and the king. But they should not, at the same time, decline from their duties, or, as Donne writes, they should stay in their spheres [10; 11].

Then Donne goes over to merchants, underlining that merchants played an important role in the East, and they also do it now in the West. In different times merchants helped progress of God’s deed. He calls them honorable people. In particular, merchants often become nobles and increase the number of nobility [10; 11–12].

A separate passage is devoted to judges, that return verdicts. Donne reminds the congregation of the Last Judgment that will give the dues to those who did not give the shelter to Christ, who refused to provide him with food and clothes. To support Christ, to pay to him is the very first civic and natural liability of a man [10; 12–13].

In society there is a sort of people that do not have a profession, that “trade not, they plough not, they preach not, they plead not, but walke and walke upon the way” and do not feel repentance for not taking part in the God’s deeds. Donne differentiates between sluggards and paupers since the latter have nothing, but themselves to offer to God and come to His assistance, and God highly appreciates this sacrifice [10; 13].

War is both the chaos and the movement to the reestablishment of the right order. “God will not fight, nor be fought for disorderly”. According to verse 20 the struggle for the order is led by nameless stars. God takes part in this struggle, unseen. And God can never support Devil and “his best friends” witches. “Let all things be done decently, and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). Donne quotes words of Paul the Apostle [10; 14–15].

To give an intermediate conclusion to the point of discussion, Donne says that God leads a spiritual war in which sovereigns, authorities, judges, merchants — “all sorts of People” are supposed to help Him. Preaching the Gospel is one of the instruments in the struggle. Through preaching the Lord from heaven participates in the struggle and amends deviations. The stars, according to verse 20, struggle in compliance with the order prescribed by God [10; 15].

Donne warns the listener that the good and evil, just like day and night, sin and holiness, paganism and true faith, truth and falsehood, Christ and the demon of destruction Belial — are absolute antitheses. The rivalry between them is absolute.

These principles can never come to reconciliation. "Let no man joyne those whom God hath severed neyther, and God hath severed Christ and Belial", exclaims Donne [10; 16]. According to Donne, the man is a "little world", "a little church". Inside the man there is a struggle between the army of body and the army of spirit. This struggle does not look like a civil war and a final reconciliation of these two armies is not possible. Every man, being himself the object of war, at the same time must make choice and become a soldier in the battle with Belial. Preaching is the instrument that guides a man in this battle [10; 17].

Donne is convinced that preaching, as the instrument of establishing the kingdom of God, is prescribed by God Himself. He also calls preaching the power of God that leads to salvation, as a means of salvation amongst life temptations. He almost literally reproduces the quotation from the Gospel of Lucas: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed mee to preach" (Luke 4:18, 4; 18). However Donne is interested in the most acceptable forms of preaching. Recalling Dio Chrysostom, he compares preaching with a lamp into which one should only add oil. One should not refuse preaching just like one should not put out a lamp and put down the spirit. Preaching directly relates to the true faith [10; 18].

Donne continues that Lord has given the church and its head to people. The priests are appointed to struggle and preach. They should lead their struggle within the limits set by the Gospel, following its order. According to Donne the order is possible when rules and commandments take place [10; 19].

Further Donne expounds his own vision of the «order». He refers to Paul the Apostle who said: "But all things should be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). Since it is impossible to reconcile with the controversies that relate to the true teaching, one should hate enemies of God with the highest hatred, directing this hatred against mistakes, but not people [10; 20]. "When their insolencies provoke us to speake of them, we shall doe no good therein, if therein we proceed not decently, and in order". Without the appropriate order even the army with its discipline will turn into a crowd of scoundrels, lose decency, and orientation towards peacemaking and circumspection. By analogy with such an army, preaching without certain boundaries grows from a proper instruction for Christians into rage and exasperation. When there is no uniformity in the matter of faith, the faith degenerates into self-will and loses the right stream. Like an attorney advocates a client in court, a preacher should represent Christ in the preaching, Christ who was sent for the sake of salvation of people. Donne supports his thought with the quotation of Paul the Apostle: "Wee command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw your selfe from all that walke Inordinate" (2 Thessalonians 3:6. 4; 20).

The clergy that at the king's behest gathers at the convocation, looks for the remedy against disorder, "our Constitutions are Canons, Canons are Rules, Rules are Orders". "And by our Service in this Mother Church, we are Canonica, Canons, Regular, Orderly men <...> men that keepe them (orders) <...> for giving example of obedience to Orders". To Donne, spiritual people are supposed to be ready for obedience more than others [10; 21]

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The examples of disorder are found among adherents of catholic church that do not obey the established order and secular laws. They can kill kings and not be considered betrayers. Catholics can postpone the execution even for kings' murderers [10; 21].

To Donne, the order presupposes the presence of the head. "It alwayes implyes some by whom wee are to be ordered, and it implyes our conformitie to him. Who is that? God certainly, without all question, God". The order is based on two rules. In compliance with the first one, all creatures depend on and originate from God, and must obey and live in accordance with the established order [10; 21]. The second rule implies that the man not only depends on and originates from God as the beginning of everything, but must always return to God as it is the man's ultimate goal. The way of return lies through the church where its head, the king, "declares to us those things wherby we are to be ordered" [10; 22].

The king as the head of the church has the last word in making decisions. According to the preacher, the power of the English monarch is comparable to the power of Judaea sovereigns and Christian emperors of the early Christianity period. Donne continues that it is not without a reason that Emperor Carl the Great wrote in one of the capitularies: "Let no man call this that I doe an usurpation". The monarch has the right to introduce innovations in the church in the presence of the clergy. Formerly English monarchs had lost these powers, but later in the time of Reformation Henry VIII restored them. Since then Edward VI and Elizabeth Tudor used the rights. This very path is also taken by Donne's contemporary king James I [10; 22–23].

On his way the king comes across an unjust and spiteful preaching [10; 24]. That is why he has to appeal to the heads of universities and give instructions to authorities of how to treat this disease. Finally, he initiates the decrease of preaching to the extent to which it took place in the time of early Christianity. According to Donne, the king's aspiration implies segregation of the serious and fundamental preaching from the frivolous and ironical one. To Donne the Reformation drives out Papistry, and keeps out Puritanism, delivers from the Superstition of the Papist and the madness of Anabaptists [10; 24–25].

Donne urges priests, in their activity, to make use of the officially established Symbol of Creed (catechism), that is represented by 39 articles and two Books of Homilies. Referring to numerous representatives of patristics, he states that the catechism has been used since in the period of original Christianity. The Word of God is better passed to children not through reading the Bible, but through the official Breviary (catechism) [10; 25–32].

Thus, the structure of Donne's preaching falls into four parts: the cause — assignment of the monarch; consideration of verse 20 and chapters of the Book of Judges; declaration of the main principles in favor of maintaining hierarchically ordered systems; and support of the king's administrative and ideological activities directed to the limitation of preaching.

Donne himself explicitly advocates complete obedience of people to executive orders and with his preaching supports the churchly politics of the authorities.

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